

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 260807

NODIS

CHEROKEE FOR DR. BRZEZINSKI

FOLLOWING REPEAT MOSCOW 15880 ACTION SECSTATE 31 OCT 77

QUOTE

S E C R E T MOSCOW 15880

NODIS

CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM TOON

EO 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: UR US

SUBJECT: CONSULTATIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST

REF: STATE 257064; STATE 259590

SUMMARY. CONVEYED SUBSTANCE OF REFTELS TO DEPUTY FOREIGN
MINISTER KOVALEV OCTOBER 31 (GROMYKO HAD BEGGED OFF BECAUSE OF HEAVY

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HOLIDAY COMMITMENTS). KOVALEV OFFERED NO INFORMATION ON CURRENT PLO
OR ARAB VIEWS, BUT DID SAY THAT THE SOVIET SIDE WAS PLANNING SPECIAL
US-USSR CONSULTATIONS IN LIGHT OF SOVIET CONTACTS WITH THE PLO
AND ARAB COUNTRIES. KOVALEV TOOK OCCASION TO RAISE ACTIVITIES OF
US CSCE DELEGATION IN BELGRADE AS WELL AS TO PLUG BREZHNEV'S RECENT
CMB PROPOSALS (SEPTTEL). END SUMMARY.

1. I CALLED ON DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KOVALEV OCTOBER 31 FOR DISCUSSION OF MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS AS PER REFTEL (MFA HAD INFORMED US OVER WEEKEND THAT GROMYKO WOULD BE UNAVAILABLE AND HAD DESIGNATED KOVALEV, AS DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR MID-EAST, TO FILL IN). KOVALEV WAS ACCOMPANIED BY ACTING CHIEF USA DIV. KOMPLEKTOV. I NOTED THAT SECY VANCE HAD ASKED ME TO BRING MIN. GROMYKO UP TO DATE ON ME DEVELOPMENTS, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO WORKING PAPER, AND TO ASK FOR SOVIET VIEWS CONCERNING PRESENT STATE OF PLAY.

2. KOVALEV, WHO SEEMED POORLY BRIEFED, UNDERTOOK TO INFORM GROMYKO FULLY OF US THINKING BUT OTHERWISE ESSENTIALLY LIMITED HIS SUBSTANTIVE REMARKS TO REITERATION OF SOVIET POSITION. HE NOTED THAT ISRAEL SEEMED TO WANT UNILATERAL VETO RIGHT OVER COMPOSITION OF PALESTINIAN DELEGATION, AND, AS RESULT, EFFECT OF US POSITION WAS TO PLACE "DOUBLE LOCK" ON DOOR TO GENEVA CONFERENCE. ONE "LOCK" WAS DEFERRAL OF FORMAL QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION UNTIL CONFERENCE MET; SECOND "LOCK" WAS TO ALLOW ISRAEL TO DECIDE WHO REPRESENTED THE PALESTINIANS. I RESPONDED THAT OUR DESIRE WAS TO FIND PRACTICAL WAY TO RESUME GENEVA CONFERENCE BY END OF YEAR, GIVEN TOUGH ISRAELI POSITION ON PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION AND CURRENT ARAB VIEWS AS WE UNDERSTOOD THEM.

3. PRESSED REGARDING SOVIET UNDERSTANDING OF CURRENT ARAB AND PLO VIEWS, KOVALEV WOULD SAY ONLY THAT SOVIET SIDE WAS PLANNING SPECIAL US-SOVIET CONSULTATIONS ON THE ME, IN LIGHT OF THE CONTACTS THE
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USSR IS MAINTAINING WITH THE PLO AND ARAB COUNTRIES. ASKED WHERE AND WHEN SUCH CONSULTATIONS MIGHT BE HELD, KOVALEV RESPONDED "MAYBE MOSCOW," AND US SIDE WOULD BE INFORMED IN DUE COURSE. ASKED IF ARAFAT WOULD SOON VISIT MOSCOW, AS RUMORED, KOVALEV WOULD SAY ONLY THAT USSR IS MAINTAINING ITS CONTACTS WITH THE PLO AND SOME ARAB COUNTRIES.

4. COMMENT. WE ASSUME THAT SOVIETS WILL UNDERTAKE INTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS WITH THOSE ARAB REPRESENTATIVES WHO SHOW UP IN MOSCOW THIS WEEK FOR COMMEMORATIVE OF 60TH ANNIVERSARY, BUT IF SOVIETS HAVE A SPECIFIC AGENDA IN MIND FOR SUCH CONSULTATIONS KOVALEV DID NOT REVEAL IT. KOVALEV, WITH WHOM I HAVE PREVIOUSLY HAD LITTLE CONTACT, SEEMED NERVOUS THROUGHOUT THE 60-MINUTE MEETING. HE SEEMED SOMEWHAT RELIEVED WHEN THE CONVERSATION SHIFTED AWAY FROM THE ME, WHICH LEADS US TO DOUBT THAT HE HAS PERMANENTLY BEEN GIVEN THIS ASPECT OF FORMER FIRST DEPUTY KUZNETSOV'S PORTFOLIO. IN ANY CASE, DURING THIS CALL SOVIET SIDE GAVE NO SIGN OF AWARENESS OF NEW ARAB/PLO FLEXIBILITY ON QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION
.
TOON
UNQUOTE VANCE".

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